

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A watercraft storage apparatus for storing a watercraft in water, the watercraft having a hull and a bow, two sides, and an aft, comprising:
 - an inflatable portion that surrounds the sides and the bow of the watercraft above the waterline and is sized to provide protection of an above waterline section of the hull from damage that can be caused from wave action or from other objects striking or coming into contact with the hull;
 - a flexible, water-impervious, lower sheet section attached to the inflatable portion that envelops the under waterline section of the hull; and
 - a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from an area bounded by the inflatable portion and the aft section, wherein the inflatable portion maintains a general U-shape due to air pressure in the inflatable portion, wherein the inflatable portion lacks a rigid frame structure, and wherein the movable aft section includes a rigid portion defining a general U-shape.
2. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the aft section includes a pivotably mounted drive-in ramp with a sloped outside surface and a sloped inside surface, wherein at least a portion of the ramp is buoyant.
3. (Currently Amended) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the aft section includes a U-shaped drop-down gate defined by rigid tubing that is movable up or down.
4. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 3, wherein the drop down gate is selectively controllable by an air bladder and an air pump.
5. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, further comprising an undershield that is attached to the inflatable portion below the lower sheet section.

6. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, further comprising at least one vertically oriented guidepost that provides a visual reference to positioning the watercraft in the watercraft storage apparatus.

7. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower sheet section is made from buoyant material.

8. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower sheet section includes at least one check valve.

9. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower sheet section is embedded with a biocide.

10. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower sheet section is detachable from the inflatable portion and the moveable aft section.

11. (Currently Amended) The watercraft storage ~~unit~~ apparatus of claim 1 wherein the inflatable sides are made with puncture and abrasion resistant material and with seams that are heat sealed or RF welded and reinforced.

12. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inflatable portion includes a rub guard on the outside perimeter thereof.

13. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inflatable portion has a cylindrical cross-section between about 6.0 to 18.0 inches in diameter.

14. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inflatable portion has a cylindrical cross-section is at least 9 inches or more in diameter.

15. (Original) A watercraft storage apparatus for storing a watercraft in water, the watercraft including a hull, a bow, two sides, and an aft, comprising:

an inflatable portion that surrounds the sides and bow of the watercraft above the waterline and is sized to provide protection of an above waterline section of the hull from damage that can be caused from wave action or from other objects striking or coming into contact with the hull;

a flexible, water-impervious, lower sheet section attached to the inflatable portion that envelops the under water line section of the hull; and

a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from an area bounded by the inflatable portion and the aft section, wherein the aft section includes a ramp that is pivotably attached to the inflatable portion, the ramp having a sloped outside surface and a sloped inside surface, wherein the ramp is buoyant in the water.

16. (Currently Amended) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 15, further comprising an undershield that is attached to the inflatable portion below the lower sheet section.

17. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 15, wherein the lower sheet section is detachable from the inflatable portion and the moveable aft section.

18. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable portion has a cylindrical cross-section between about 6.0 to 18.0 inches in diameter.

19. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 18, wherein the inflatable portion has a cylindrical cross-section at least 9 inches or more in diameter.

20. (Original) A watercraft storage apparatus comprising:
a watercraft having a hull and a bow, two sides, and an aft;
an inflatable portion that surrounds the sides and the bow of the watercraft above the waterline, the inflatable portion defining a maximum outside dimension greater than a maximum width defined by the sides of the watercraft, the inflatable portion defining a minimum inside dimension less than the maximum width defined by the sides of the watercraft;
a flexible, water-impervious, lower sheet section attached to the inflatable portion that envelops the under waterline section of the hull; and

a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from an area bounded by the inflatable portion and the aft section.

21. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 20, wherein a detachable connection is provided around a periphery of the inflatable portion for detachably connecting to the lower sheet section.

22. (Original) A watercraft storage apparatus comprising:
an inflatable portion having a front, two sides, and an inner area for receiving a watercraft and surrounding a bow and opposite sides of the watercraft;
a flexible lower sheet section extending across a bottom of the inflatable portion between the sides;
a detachable mounting arrangement between the inflatable portion and the lower sheet section;
a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from the inner area.

23. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 22, wherein the detachable mounting arrangement includes a peripheral flap extending from an outside of the inflatable portion.

24. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 23, wherein the flap includes grommets.

25. (Original) The watercraft storage apparatus of claim 23, wherein the flap includes one of a hook or loop fastener material.

26. (Original) A watercraft storage apparatus for storing a watercraft in water, the watercraft including a hull, a bow, two sides, and an aft, comprising:
an inflatable portion that surrounds the sides and bow of the watercraft above the waterline and is sized to provide protection of an above waterline section of the hull from

damage that can be caused from wave action or from other objects striking or coming into contact with the hull;

a flexible, water-impervious, lower sheet section attached to the inflatable portion that envelops the under water line section of the hull; and

a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from wherein the aft section includes a U-shaped gate, wherein the U-shaped gate includes rigid tubing and a selectively inflatable bladder disposed outside of the rigid tubing, the inflatable bladder positioned below a first rigid tubing, and above a second rigid tubing.

27. (Currently Amended) A method for protecting a watercraft in water comprising: providing an inflatable apparatus defining a U-shape having an inner area; while the inflatable apparatus is floating on a top surface of the water, driving a watercraft into the inner area of the apparatus;

positioning the watercraft within the inner area such that each side of the watercraft has an inflatable portion of the inflatable apparatus disposed directly under the widest portion of the side of the watercraft, and a water impervious sheet is positioned beneath all portions of the hull of the watercraft.

28. (New) A watercraft storage apparatus for storing a watercraft in water, the watercraft having a hull and a bow, two sides, and an aft, comprising:

an inflatable portion that surrounds the sides and the bow of the watercraft above the waterline and is sized to provide protection of an above waterline section of the hull from damage that can be caused from wave action or from other objects striking or coming into contact with the hull;

a flexible, water-impervious, lower sheet section attached to the inflatable portion that envelops the under waterline section of the hull; and

a moveable aft section mounted to the inflatable portion that allows for entry and exit of the watercraft from an area bounded by the inflatable portion and the aft section, wherein the aft section includes a pivotably mounted drive-in ramp with a sloped outside surface and a sloped inside surface, wherein at least a portion of the ramp is buoyant.

29. (New) A method for protecting the hull of watercraft both above and below the waterline while it is moored in water using an in-water storage device having an inflatable fender that surrounds the sides and bow of the watercraft; a movable rigid aft section mounted to the inflatable fender; and a flexible, water-impervious lower sheet section attached to the inflatable fender and aft section that envelops the under waterline section of the hull; comprising the steps of:

(a) lowering the aft section of the in-water storage device to thereby provide access of the watercraft into the in-water storage device, and once the watercraft is in the in-water storage device, raising the aft section so that the lower sheet section envelops the under waterline section of the hull to protect it from biofouling; and

(b) while the watercraft is kept in the in-water storage device, preventing the above waterline section of the hull from coming into contact with stationary or floating objects by virtue of the inflatable fender surrounding the watercraft.